

**Internal Colonization, African Americans, and No Child Left Behind: The impact of education policy on academic and socio-economic achievement and the negative effects on African American students**

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## **Table of Contents**

## **Abstract**

Internal colonization

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **A. Chapter Overview**

Internal colonization is the central concept used in this study regarding how governments and elites shape socio-economic conditions that influence how education policy is implemented. Education policy in turn is one factor that shapes academic achievement and influences socio-economic status. Internal colonization manipulates education policies, such as No Child Left Behind, causing low academic and socio-economic achievement among African American students in urban environments. Although education policy attempts to improve all student levels of academic achievement, because of the effects of internal colonization on African American students, many African American students find as No Child BBicultto iuchceed b as No Chthacadem

had a passion for education policy reform and was really interested in the dynamics of the current policy reform, the No Child Left Behind Act. Growing up in various communities of various income levels I personally experienced the differences in public school education quality based on the income levels of the surrounding communities. I always felt that if every child had the resources wealthy communities had in their public schools, many low-income families would potentially have a greater chance of moving out of generational poverty. After consulting different people I decided to combine my interest in education policy reform with my interest in internal colonization.

*Although I would prefer to analyze and apply this theoretical concept to the entire lower and working class populations in the United States, both past and present, because of historical racial conflicts it is almost impossible to study the socio-economic influences of low-income groups without addressing the unique racial, ethnic, and cultural impacts on the condition of such groups.*

### **A. Research Problem**

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), established as law on January 8, 2002 by Congress and President Bush, is an educational reform policy that seeks to create “accountability, local control, flexible new options for parents, and record finding for what works to see every child in America -- regardless of ethnicity, income, or background -- achieve high standards” (Rod Paige). NCLB was passed into law because:

since the Elementary and Secondary Education Act first passed Congress in 1965, the federal government has spent more than \$242 billion through 2003 to help educate disadvantaged children. Yet, the achievement gap in this country between rich and poor and white and minority students remains wide. According to the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) on reading in 2000, only 32 percent of fourth-graders can read at a proficient level and thereby demonstrate solid academic achievement; and while scores for the highest-performing students have improved over time, those of America's lowest-

performing students have declined ‘(National Assessment of Educational Progress 2001)’ (Department of Education).

NCLB seeks to improve academic achievement by putting “the focus on instruction and methods that have been proven to work. It makes a billion-dollar annual investment to ensure every child learns to read by third grade. And it provides the resources for reform and unprecedented flexibility so states and local communities can get the job done” (“Welcome Letter”).

The policy established by NCLB continues to be heavily debated and remains controversial. NCLB has seven components that are specifically geared towards improving public education. The first component of the act is to close the achievement gap, which represents the population of students who score below the average student on  
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The third component seeks to increase flexibility in school wide programs and reduce bureaucracy in “overlapping and duplicative categorical grant programs” through combining local, state, and federal funding to improve schools. Federal funding in turn is linked when “a charter option for states and districts committed to accountability and reform will be created. Under this program, charter states and districts would be freed from categorical program requirements in return for submitting a five-year performance agreement to the Secretary of Education and being subject to especially rigorous standards of accountability” (Department of Education, “NCLB”).

The fourth component plans to reward success and penalize failure by means of increasing or decreasing federal funding. Success as described by the act is narrowing the achievement gap and improving overall student achievement over past achievement levels. Failure is the result of “a state [failing] to meet their performance objectives and [demonstrating] results in academic achievement” (Department of Education, “NCLB”).

The fifth component of the act gives parents the ability to choose public education institutions that best meet their children’s need based on school report cards. Report cards will signify the achievement level of a public school, thus allowing parents to

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teachers. To be a qualified teacher the act expects teachers to have higher levels of education. Teachers are expected to work “with institutions of higher education to improve instruction and curriculum” (Department of Education, “NCLB”). Therefore, teachers need to have a four-year college degree and an extra year of educational training in math and science.

The seventh and last component of NCLB is to provide federal funding to improve school safety. School safety is important because in order for students to achieve academically they need to feel and be safe from dangerous and harmful elements. Through the act teachers have authority to “remove violent or persistently disruptive students from the classroom” (Department of Education, “NCLB”). Schools will be funded to provide and promote safety and drug prevention programs during and after school. NCLB requires violent and dangerous schools to report its activity and provide parents with alternative school choices for their children. Those schools that train teachers to build character through lessons and activities will receive extra funding from the federal government (Department of Education, “NCLB”).

Part of the controversy surrounding NCLB concerns both its financial and developmental capacity to contribute to the academic achievement condition of African American students - particularly those attending urban public schools. This issue is important because of the academic achievement gap between black and white students in the United States urban public school system. Many African American students continue to perform poorly on standardized tests and other academic courses in comparison to white students. Statistically, a 2002 SAT score report conducted by of The College Board’s *National Report* revealed, the average combined white SAT score to be 1082

while African Americans scored an average of 865, a 217 point difference (Appendix A).

It is important to research why black students continue to struggle academically and

whether NCLB will negatively affect African Am

This study will investigate the NCLB Act, analyze theoretical debates and arguments as well as critically explore internal colonization theory and its impacts on the United States education system and policy. The research will result from collecting written sources, journals, press releases, books and organization websites that discuss and analyze internal colonization, education reform, and policy, including analytical discussions regarding NCLB.

standardized testing, reading initiatives, increased funding, parental options, qualifying teachers, and public safety. NCLB can have a positive impact on African American students if it is implemented correctly by states, taking internal colonization conditions into account using both financial and community resources. However, currently the nation is in the middle of a fiscal crisis that has prevented NCLB from being fully financially implemented. Until NCLB can be fully implemented all students will be greatly challenged by its restrictions.

## **Chapter 2: Theoretical Analysis**

### **A. What is Internal Colonization?**

Internal colonization (IC) is a social and cultural set of mechanisms by which American society reinforces its divisions of class and race to sustain the wealth and power of its dominant elites. It is the foundation of socio-economic injustice. Internal colonization connects the processes of cultural hegemony and capitalist relations which are experienced within key social institutions

world” nations, however, the effects of colonization are much more complex. Aime Cesaire observes “between colonizer and colonized there is room only for forced labor, intimidation, pressure, the police, taxation, theft,...contempt, mistrust, arrogance, self-complacency,...brainless elites, degraded masses. No human contact, but relations of domination and submission which turn the colonizing man into a classroom monitor, an army sergeant, a prison guard, a slave driver, and the indigenous man into an instrument of production” (21). There are many examples of the kind of relations Cesaire describes between the wealthy and poor within modern day American society. Forced labor, intimidation, pressure, police, theft, mistrust, and etc. for example, encompasses immigrant exploitation in sweatshops and trafficking that represent two visible forms of colonization found in American social and economic life. There are many instances of such relations that Cesaire points out among American citizens regardless of culture and race.

Where colonialism takes on a cultural dimension is where particular forms of indoctrination and other more subtle forms of manipulation can be found. Many Americans passionately believe that they are able to potentially “pull themselves up by their boot straps” to achieve wealth and that America is the “land of opportunity”. These beliefs are a deep seated part of American culture. But adherence to such beliefs can contribute to the perpetuation of injustice and oppression. “Even as much of what we now recognize as culture was produced by the co

language, race, geography, and history in a single concept” according to Nicholas B. Dirks (3). When American students are educated in grade school about U.S. history many things are not mentioned or studied that were parts of the formation of the United States of America. American children are given a dominant groups’ belief in unlimited opportunity that in turn serves to establish the cultural hegemony that masks as well as perpetuates oppression and exploitation. For example, if you believe you can succeed but issues of class and race barriers are not addressed then you end up internalizing the dominant ideology. “Pressures are placed on schools, in particular, in assisting in the

maintaining and deepening the ruptures of a classed...bringing both colonialism and culture back home” (Dirks, 4). Both the colonizer and colonized fall victim to colonial culture regardless of power dynamics. The colonizer must also live among the rules of a colonized society just the same as the colonized. Although the colonizer may have more socio-economic freedom the toll of oppression and degradation weighs heavily on all who must live in a society that depends on oppressed populations for sustained wealth.

### **B. Internal Colonization and African Americans**

African Americans have been greatly impacted by internal colonization in the United States. From slavery to the Civil Rights Movement, Jim Crow to Affirmative Action, African Americans have been oppressed and indoctrinated to accept a condition of inferiority, subordination, cultural degradation, and economic deprivation. African Americans have endured many things and worked extremely hard for equal rights and racial justice. Incorporation into the American mainstream is one of the many things that African Americans seek to achieve. In the process of seeking such inclusion African Americans have assimilated into the dominant cultural, social, and economic structures. In modern times the fight for equality has been more about socio-economic access and less about race. Race continues to be a very important issue in American culture and society and the fight for racial justice is very important; however, there is an underlying condition, internal colonization, that is the root of a great deal of injustice both racially and socio-economically.

As civil rights continued to be granted over time many African Americans were able to advance socially and economically. Both a black middle and upper class grew out of new opportunities. Along with the opportunities that became available, arose issues of

legitimacy related to those opportunities. “Legitimacy involves gaining recognition and respect for one’s perspectives, beliefs, and actions. It is a necessary component of all behavioral systems. Because cultural hegemony tends to negate self-conscious and self-defined institution building among African Americans, legitimacy, as a mediating process, becomes problematic” (Semmes, 93). Internal coiothe(behavioral system)Tj442 0002 2 327.8s a422othat s a

of black members of the middle class makes them more vulnerable than their white counterparts to economic downturns, government budget cuts, and changes in affirmative action policy” (Reed, 5). Yet middle class African Americans do not associate with lower class African Americans outside of a unifying, institutionalized racial discriminatory factors. African Americans who are not socio-economically well off continue to suffer from a great deal of oppression, discrimination, and degradation. Bell Hooks notes,

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Internal colonization affects many institutions within American society, however, education is the key to how the condition is experienced, and it is the systemic institution that greatly influences our society from early childhood to adulthood. The process of education in America has a socio-economic bias that divides society into class structures. Samuel Bowles asserts that “the halting contribution of U.S. education to equality and full human development appears intimately related to the nature of the economic structures into which the schools must integrate each new generation of youth” (53). The education system is an institution that aims to provide American children with fundamental tools that is supposed to prepare them for contributing to the nation’s economy and society. Contribution to the U.S. economy and society includes and demands a working class in order for the economy to sustain itself. As documented in the book Democracy Upside Down,

the accumulation function of schools is related to the interaction between knowledge and people in the institution. It refers to the ways in which educational institutions provide support for the social division of labor in our society and the relentless search for profit. Schools thus not only allocate knowledge; they allocate people as well. ‘Cultural capital’ is distributed in such a way that students are allocated to their ‘proper’ place in society. What this process does...is to roughly reproduce a hierarchically organized labor force and class, race, and gender inequality (Exoo, 148).

Therefore some fundamental tools that are provided in schools are geared towards

selected members of U.S. society to create

The economy produces people. The production of commodities may be considered of quite m

and consumption'. Such an emphasis on consumption, as a kind of light at the end of a week's travel through a monotonous and dreary tunnel, serves the requirements of capital accumulation as well. The structure of capitalist economics rests on a constant demand for consumer goods and for individual ownership of them" (Exoo, 148). Race also is a very important factor within the dynamics of class but even within racial groups the class structure commonly models the structure of the ruling class system. The ruling class system functions as a catalyst for others to follow. "For the institutions of economic life do not work mechanically and mindlessly to produce social outcomes, but rather change and develop through the types of class relationships to which they give rise. The educational system is involved in the reproduction and change of these class relationships and cannot be understood by simply 'adding up' the effects of schooling on each individual to arrive at a total social impact" (Bowles, 67). Therefore inequality arises and spawns injustice toward social groups based on class and race. It is easy to delineate power and socio-economic status among those individuals who are easily recognizable within society more different than the dominant power/elite group.

The extent of socio-economic stratification varies upon many factors. However, the main cultural understanding relies on and the belief that if one works hard enough one too can acquire and share ruling class power. The educational system creates and establishes class privilege. It validates citizen's right to climb a socio-economic ladder above those who are unable to receive an adequate educational background. Samuel Bowles notes, "the educational system legitimates economic inequality by providing an open, objective, and ostensibly meritocratic mechanism for assigning individuals to unequal economic positions. The educational system fosters and reinforces the belief that

economic success depends essentially on the possession of technical and cognitive skills - skills which it is organized to provide in an efficient, equitable, and unbiased manner on the basis of meritocratic principle” (103). There is consciousness of ruling class control over the educational system; unfortunately, it continues to wield dominance over the self interests of the dominant white culture.

## **Chapter 3: The Education System**



taxes collected from the residents of their community (not California). For California, the disparities are found in parent support, time commitments, PTA-type funding, etc.

Communities that have a greater number of lower-income households tend to collect lower revenues; thus those public schools within that community receive less funding even with additional federal funding. Federal funding usually is not enough because of the lack of resources and services offered in lower-income communities. Much of the federal funding allocated to these schools goes towards free and reduced-cost meals, buses, testing, and simple maintenance of decaying facilities. According to Coleman, economic re-segregation caused by “white flight” has caused many public schools to lose funding resources. As affluent whites and minorities moved out of inner city areas to the suburbs, those urban neighborhoods that were left behind lost a great deal of revenue as family incomes decreased.

2) Transiency - Many students who change schools throughout their education oftentimes have a much more difficult time adjusting to new academic structures. A 1993 Journal of American Medical Association study confirmed the problems associated with student and family mobility. “The study found that children who move frequently are 50 to 100 percent more likely to have to repeat a grade, and experience delayed growth or development, behavior problems, and learning disabilities” (Coleman, 37). Since public schools vary on curriculum requirements and textbooks, many students who move several times throughout their education are left behind in their studies.

3) Attendance - Some public schools receive allocations of funding based on attendance; in such cases many public schools suffer from a lack of resources. Coleman states, “there is a high positive correlation between school attendance and academic

achievement” (40). Students who have a higher percentage of absences typically are those struggling with academic achievement.

4) Home responsibilities and circumstances - For those students who have a great deal of responsibility at home, such as contributing income or caring for younger siblings or elderly/sick relatives, academic achievement is often very challenging to maintain.

“Many students have been thrust into the role of miniature adult. They may be responsible for caring for a disabled or infirm parent or getting younger siblings off to school and caring for them until parents return home from work...still others are left to fend for themselves and younger siblings when drug or alcohol addicted parents lose sight of their responsibilities” (Coleman, 41). Students that are impacted by unfortunate circumstances beyond their own control and responsibility are often lacking in academic achievement. Some students coping mechanisms inhibit them from learning and succeeding academically. For those students who already contend with learning disabilities and a lack of support are even more likely to face challenges in achievement levels.

5) Fear of success - The pressure of succeeding affects many students because of the stress or challenge that parents and teachers put on success. “Tresemmer (1977) studied this phenomenon and identified three reasons why individuals may avoid success. Individuals may avoid success for the following reasons: (1) fear that success may require the individual to reassess their view of themselves; (2) fear of being rejected [by peers and relatives]; (3) fear that their ability would not meet the extra demands created by success” (Coleman, 42).

6) A lack of interest - “For students who have not met with academic success or otherwise have been made to feel like social outcasts, interest in learning is easily abated. The level of our self-esteem is in part predicted on the measure of our successes” (Coleman, 43). Many students lose interest when they feel they have not completely grasped all of the materials, met expectations of their teachers and parents, and are thereby passed on.

7) A lack of parental support - Coleman believes “we live in a society where many families are dysfunctional, leaving kids psychologically and physically vulnerable. Where families fail, schools have had to pick up the slack” (46). When parents are unable to help their children with homework, and many are unable or do not deal with the many academic and social challenges their child may face, student achievement lags. Parental involvement is essential to the academ



students are typically going to need additional attention in class from causing disruptions or simply existing in silence and neglect.

11) Affiliation with deviant subculture - Some students who are neglected by parents and their surrounding community resort

appropriate role models necessary to project a picture of a brighter future” (54). This issue may stand as a barrier between students and academic instructors who do not know how to reach or encourage students to do well or show that they have a chance to improve their life through academic achievement.

### Standardized Testing

The public policy approach to improve academic achievement issues has been through standardized testing. Nationwide, school districts are required to implement standardized tests in order to improve public education and to measure how public school students perform. Standardized testing is intended to notify parents, teachers’ school administrators, and the government about how well students are doing so that students that test poorly can receive extra help in order to achieve the level expected nationally. Although standardized testing is meant to be helpful it has become a twisted bureaucratic procedure that makes public school education even more difficult to succeed. In his book, *Why National Standards and Tests?*, John F. Jennings explains:

there was no ‘truth in teaching or learning’ in many schools. Teachers and students could only guess, sometimes with limited guidance, what they were supposed to know to be deemed successful. The reason for this lack of connection between the test and the curriculum was that accountability had been moved to the state level but the decisions on what ought to be taught had been left at the local level. The politicians-governors and state legislators-had responded to public displeasure with the public schools by instituting new tests in an effort to get better results from the schools. But few policymakers had moved to define first what results were to be expected from these tests: the academic standards had not been openly debated, defined, and disseminated. The reasons for this ‘disconnect’ lies in our nation’s history. The U.S. Constitution embodies the idea that government should be limited in its powers and that the closer the government is to the people, the better it will function. In education, this has meant that although states have authority over the schools, the power to determine the content of education has usually been delegated to local school boards. And because there are 14,000 or so school districts in the country, there is great variation in the education being offered to students. (4)

With such dilemmas and confusing methods, states could not develop a strong enough curriculum or even expectation of their students that could be measured or put to any legitimate test. Thus the creation of a national standard stemmed from the need to establish a clear goal of academic achievement.

During the early 1990's President George H.W. Bush sought to establish a clear goal of academic achievement that could be expected from all of Am

inflation increased, teacher certification and entry requirements dwindled as the demand for more teachers increased, and school testing failed to take into consideration environmental and learning conditions of lower income students.

## **B. African American Achievement Conditions in Public Schools**

Will NCLB improve the academic achievement condition of African American students in urban schools? To what degree will the act improve academic achievement? This chapter aims to analyze African American students' academic achievement in public schools. The ideal to providing free national public education for children was deeply rooted in the vision of the United States by its founding fathers. "Jefferson proposed universal education to promote 'the selection of the youths of genius from among the classes of the poor,' and declared 'We hope to avail the State of those talents which nature has sown so liberally among the poor as the rich, but which perish without use, if not sought for and cultivated'" (Kahlenberg, 13). Currently despite the sentiments of Jefferson, many poor and minority children are not given an equal opportunity to explore their talents on the same level as others.

African American academic achievement conditions have evolved in a more positive direction since desegregation was mandated under *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. Nevertheless, today, the African American academic achievement gap is a subject of great concern and debate. So what causes African Americans to suffer from an academic achievement gap in America's public school system? Social class status, racial segregation, teacher expectations, cultural differences and conflicts, language differences, and community forces are a few factors that dramatically impact academic achievement levels among African American students. Some analysts believe the achievement gap is

a result of a feeling of hopelessness caused by a lack of evidence that an education can  
and will “inform, or alter one’s self-perception or one’s status as a me



American males can benefit from testing because they will have the opportunity to receive additional support and services to help them achieve successfully. On the other hand, if the tests are used in any other means other than for progress, African American males will suffer from the inaccurate results. Although NCLB can be helpful it should consider the conditions behind Rosa Smith's statistics and Geraldine Coleman's points, such as socio-economic status, transience, home responsibilities, fear of success, lack of interest and parental support, and work responsibilities, among others. If these factors are not incorporated into policy standardized testing becomes another discriminatory measure that disadvantages low income and minority students.

## **Chapter 4: Practical Analysis [NCLB at Work]**

### **A. NCLB**

Many Americans know the No Child Left Behind Act to be an initiative of 2001 proposed by President George W. Bush to improve the quality of public education and academic achievement. Actually NCLB began about ten years earlier with President George H.W. Bush. In fact the roots of NCLB can be located within the first President Bush's 1991 education plan. According to John F. Jennings,

on April 18, 1991, President Bush...announced his new education plan at the White House. He stated his belief that the time had come to establish world-class standards for what children should know and be able to do in five core subjects: English, mathematics, science, history and geography. A system of voluntary examinations would also be developed for all fourth-, eighth-, and 12<sup>th</sup>-grade students in these five core subjects. The issue of report cards showing the academic performance of all schools, school districts, and states would be encouraged...These elements of national standards and examinations were the fundamental building blocks for the Bush-Alexander plan to 'construct an entirely new and radically different education system over time' (19).

The plan was called the America 2000 program and was, also supported and implemented by the Clinton administration. It was designed to bring all children up to an acceptable academic achievement level by the year 2000. John Jennings states that the National Council of Education Standards and Testing felt "national standards were necessary, according to the council, to ensure educational opportunity for all Americans, especially those not now doing well in school because they are held in low expectations. Second, standards were needed to enhance the civic culture, especially because the population was growing increasingly diverse. And third, raising standards would enhance America's economic competitiveness through improving the quality of human capital" (23). From the 1980s through the 1990s it was clear, to both Bush and Clinton, that the United States



and economic groups of students” (1). NCLB has pushed the burden of financing its required testing on states, which has created a great strain on state budgets that are already currently undergoing fiscal crises.

Another significant problematic issue w

education system if funding and other resources are then provided to help improve academic achievement levels.

Component #2: Improving Literacy by Putting Reading First

The second component of NCLB is aimed at improving literacy through reading, focusing on early childhood instruction. This component is a positive step towards addressing the academic achievement challenges students face by working with students at earlier stages of their fundamental growth. In her article *The Best Investment We can Make* Author Ayelish McGarvey

explains that although the federal Head Start program has done an admirable job helping at-risk 3- and 4-year-olds, child development experts now universally agree that learning really begins at birth, which means that the best time to begin helping the disadvantaged children succeed academically is before they enter school. Moreover, she criticizes President Bush's program, No Child Left Behind Act, stressing that

expense of developing these assessments, states must absorb the additional cost of administering and scoring the tests” (8). Again a lack of enough financial support from NCLB has created a great deal of financial pressure on states.

Second, the debate over the

complaint is the administration's failure to honor its funding commitments...the under funding complaints are accompanied by studies indicating that the states' costs of meeting NCLB requirements are running far beyond the money that the federal

teacher quality will go up because of training and salary expectations that will make training worthwhile. Creating incentives is challenging when teachers already have to contend with stressful expectations and job requirements while receiving low wages and short hours. As Richard Rothstein has noted, “the new law’s incentives are distorting teaching as well. Rational teachers in many states have begun to focus most of their attention on those students who are just below the proficiency point, because only their improvement is rewarded in the accountability system...The most surefire way to show annual progress and avoid sanctions is to aim for a small improvement, which is all that’s necessary, from the nearly proficient group” (46). Some teachers do need to improve and receive more qualified training, but at what price is NCLB willing to provide sufficiently for these enhancements. If teachers are going to have higher expectations they should also be well compensated for their efforts.

#### Component #7: Making Schools Safer for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

This portion of NCLB has been the least discussed and thought about. Many

achievement issues of African Americans is as poor as it is, it is important to understand why low academic achievement continues to digress as new policies and initiatives are passed in an effort to improve such issues. NCLB will be analyzed in regards to positive and negative possible impacts on African American students. The analysis of the No Child Left Behind Act is divided by each component of the Act.

Component #1: Closing the Achievement Gap

Accountability and high standards is what the Department of Education believes is necessary to improve academic achievement. Accountability means to reward and penalize public school systems that are or are not doing their job, based on a national standard. Thard. Tnt36 T2e4Bo681 90 4e2 0 0 12 175.65933081.342T2e4Bo681 90 4 Afrcan Am 0 12i175.

transience, attendance, home responsibility and circumstances, fear of success, a lack of interest and parental support, preoccupation with lack of necessities, work responsibilities, organic causes, affiliation with deviant subculture, a failure to master basic concepts, and family values. Many African American students in urban public schools often suffer from these exterior conditions. In spite of this, as the Principal of Washington D.C.'s Thurgood Marshall Academy (TMA) Douglas Tyson pointed out, "testing should be matched with what is being taught." If standardized tests do not cover what students have been taught, it is an unfair method to use for any purpose. Another possible problem with standardized testing is if it takes away from the lesson plan or curriculum designed to educate students appropriately. Beth Bulgeron, TMA's NCLB Compliance Officer, feels standardized testing, as a diagnostic tool is a positive effort towards improving academic achievement issues only if the test is addressed. However, Bulgeron expressed that Standardized testing is "not a good way to teach material." In any case, standardized testing can be a positive approach if it effectively evaluates student achievement.

#### Component #2: Improving Literacy by Putting Reading First

Focus on Reading in Early Grades is an excellent approach to improving academic achievement of African American stud





Qualified teachers, funding that works, and a strengthened academic curriculum are very important and possibly positive ways to improve academic achievement. But what is a qualified teacher? Many teachers can be required to be highly trained, skilled and educated but is NCLB going to compensate these teachers for their efforts and expenses in acquiring these qualifications? The answer currently is no, African American students can definitely benefit from high quality, qualified teachers, but again NCLB does not provide the monetary incentive. There also needs to be qualified counselors on each public school's campus to address issues pertaining to academic achievement such as attendance, home responsibility and circumstances, a lack of interest of fear of success, organic causes and affiliation with deviant subcultures. Beth Bulgeron expressed that requiring qualified teachers is unfair because different areas demand different things from teachers such as teaching more than one subject. To provide funding is the only way to create programs that work and strengthen academic curriculum needs. Funding and support from parents, teachers, communities, and the nation is also vital.

#### Component #7: Making Schools Safer for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Teacher protection, promoting school safety, rescuing students from unsafe schools, and supporting character education are outstanding goals and a very positive effort that will positively affect many African American students who attend congested urban schools that are in high violent areas. "Data on homicides and suicides at school show there were 32 school-associated violent deaths in the United States between July 1, 1999 and June 30, 2000, including 24 homicides, 16 of which involved school-aged children" (NCES). The only challenge to these efforts is, once more, funding. Also, to

transfer students from unsafe schools to alternatives can create a problem as well. Those students left behind in violent schools then become violently concentrated and even more dangerous. Instead, there needs to be supportive services that attend to the needs of these problematic students. As Coleman acknowledges, many academic achievement issues pertain to familial and socio-economic conditions. The real effort should be to gain control of the dangerous and violent environmental conditions and students.

### Summary

Over all, African American students can achieve academically through the theories NCLB of 2001.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

### **A. Suggestion on Breaking the Cycle of Internal Colonization**

How do we break the cycle of internal colonization and meet the needs of African American students in urban public schools? Breaking the cycle of internal colonization is difficult. Many African Americans who have successfully achieved upper class status often perpetuate internal colonization and neglect the needs of lower class African Americans. This elite population tends to ignore socio-economic injustices, although they are attentive to racial discrimination issues. Bell Hooks eloquently acknowledges this tendency explicitly when she asserts:

significantly, even though a growing majority of privileged-class black folks condemn and betray the black poor and underclass, they avoid critique and confrontation themselves by not focusing on their class power. All black people know that no matter your class you will suffer wounds inflicted by racism, however relative. Fewer black people know intimately the concrete everyday ways class power and privilege mediate this pain, allowing some black folks to live luxuriously despite racism. Sadly, to escape this pain or to shield themselves from the genocide that is assaulting black masses, they surrender all transformative forms of racial solidarity in anti-racist struggle to protect their status and public image by pretending that they know best and are best positioned to protect the collective public good of all black people irrespective of class. (98)

It is important to challenge elite African American individuals who continue to accept mainstream socio-economic arguments and ideologies. Adapting to an “existing white supremacist capitalist patriarchy” (Hooks, 99) is not success and must not be viewed as such. It is vital that African American elites part with the status quo and use their influence to improve socio-economic conditions of the lower class populations through equitable opportunity promotion and by addressing the different components of internal colonization.

When it comes to American public education we are failing the majority of our children. Ignoring cultural aspects of African American student development continues to be responsible for academic achievement failures. No Child Left Behind does not take into account cultural, socio-economic, and environmental conditioning that prevents academic success. If NCLB does not counteract these social and cultural conditions it will become another contemporary policy that tracks students into lower socio-economic status. “The very structure of public education and the philosophies that have guided its development and implementation have neglected to recognize and incorporate salient features of black culture and the black experience in America” (Reed, 68). NCLB attempts to empower parents with an ability to make a choice as to which schools their children attend. This empowerment is detrimental for the parents who truly need empowerment. This policy adjustment does not support parents of lower socio-economic status who work many jobs and are in no financial position to send their children to schools farther away from their neighborhood.

NCLB attempts to empower teachers through the reduction of bureaucracy, increased benefits for excellent qualification and increased student achievement on standardized tests. Unfortunately these restrictions have becom mm

responsibility. “Involving parents in planning and implementation helps make the

African Americans, it must also function as a cultural, social, and political institution (Perry, 99).

The bottom up approach Perry suggests is a good way to approach any situation. To involve African American students, parents, and communities in the education policy changes in order to begin creating and conducting positive changes that work is the only way academic achievement can really be achieved among African American students.

I would contend in light of Perry's arguments,







The approaches needed to facilitate deconstructing internal colonization practices would require a series of comprehensive adjustments to NCLB. Such adjustments would include funding and resource allotments, community support and inclusion, as well as recognition of internal colonization factors. Although I have conducted theoretical research on the topic of internal colonization and the No Child Left Behind Act, I am not admit that I am not an expert on education policy reform and therefore offer an opinion based on the confinement of my research and experience.

### Closing the Achievement Gap

It is important to balance high standards and accountability with fair and equal allocation of responsibility. The education of American children must be the responsibility and priority of American society, not just teachers, administrators, and policy makers. It is vital that school or student failure be addressed by the community in which that student and school are located. Standardized testing must incorporate the environment and conditions of each student. It should be the responsibility of teachers to allocate exams according to the curricula and student ability for example, language barriers, learning disabilities and cultural differences should be accommodated and included in all curricula and standardized testing measures. Standardized testing should only be one form of measuring academic achievement levels. Student achievement should be measured according to other abilities outside of reading, math and science. It is extremely important that teachers receive the support and training to do their jobs properly. It is necessary for teachers to have freedom to teach without being subject to exclusive reliance on standardized testing preparation. In order to break the hold that internal colonization practices have on disadvantaged students, the education system





school that is deemed failing. Teach

# **Appendix**

## **Table of References**

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